

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 49.

Price, Five Cents.

JESSE JAMES' JUBILEE

OR
THE CELEBRATION AT THE BANDITS' CASTLE



BY W.B. LAWSON

"ROUND 'EM UP, BOYS!" YELLED JESSE JAMES AS FRANK DROPPED THE NOOSE OF A LARIAT OVER THE SHERIFF'S HEAD.

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Jesse James' Jubilee;

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By W. B. LAWSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEATH ROLL.

"Call the roll, Frank, and if silence follows for answer to a name, it means that the dead do not speak!"

These ominous words were uttered by Jesse James, the wild Western fugitive who defied all the efforts of all the officers of the law to capture him.

He was a man whom a strange run of bitter happenings had made "take to the bush." His deeds, brought about by cruel circumstances, more or less beyond his control, had turned against him, and the daring men of a like nature who had flocked to follow his leadership.

He and his comrades had become hunted as wild beasts.

A striking man in form and face, with the strength of a giant, deadly in his aim, whatever might be the weapon he used; a man wholly without fear, true as steel to a friend, merciless as death to a foe. His face was a study, full of daring, reckless, do-and-dare. He knew but too well that he was defying Fate, and walked hand in hand with Death as his boon pard.

For the selection of the members of his reckless band, he judged men by himself and his brother, as the standard.

No man who could not reach the standard need hope to belong to Jesse James' band.

He was the Robin Hood of modern times, and if a fugitive, he yet seemed to enjoy the hunt of the officers of the law for his scalp.

Now he addressed his men after an intensely exciting and thrilling escape, following a more deadly and daring raid than was even his wont to go upon.

Seeing that capture and death seemed certain for most of the band, as they were apparently hemmed in and driven to bay, he had ordered the men to scatter, each to save himself as best he could, and that meant if he could not, to "take his medicine," imprisonment or death, as the laws of the Jesse James League taught and demanded.

There was to be no whining, no bemoaning their cruel fate, for, as they had, with eyes wide open, defied the law, they must in like manner submit.

All heard the command to "save himself who can," and they acted promptly.

All knew the time and place for those who did escape to meet.

And all knew just what means they had to use to get away.

It was the time and place appointed.

Jesse James was the last one to reach there, and his men began to dread evil had befallen him.

One by one, two by two, they had dropped in, gliding through the darkness like ghosts, and seeking the meeting place in the timber.

A number had arrived, and many were discussing the non-appearance of their chief, Jesse James, when a distant shot, then another, came to their ears.

There was at once a deadly silence.

What did it mean?

Surely, no one of the band would announce his coming to a secret meeting in this way, for ears might be on the alert to hear and betray.

In silence they waited, the eyes of all cast furtively upon Frank, as though it was for him to decide and act.

Then was heard the sound of hoof-beats.

Soon after a horseman was seen in the gloom.

He was approaching the timber.

A led horse was behind him.

The latter seemed to be carrying a pack.

"It is Jesse!"

Frank was the one who spoke.

Glad as were the men to know that their chief was safe, there was no welcoming cheer.

Those hunted men knew better.

The shot in the distance had been a warning for them to keep silent.

"Ho, Jesse!"

"Yes, Frank."

"Glad to see you."

"Thanks."

"We were fearful harm had befallen you."

"Have had several close calls."

"But I am here."

"Did you hear that shot, for it was from your way?"

"Yes, I pulled trigger."

"What was it?"

"The man is tied across his horse there."

"A prisoner?"

"To the grave, yes. I killed him."

"Ah! who is he?"

"A detective who sought to get my scalp."

"And missed, of course?"

"Well, he gambled his life against the price on my head, and—lost."

"He was a bold fellow to tackle you alone."

"I got warning from a friend that he was to ambush me, for he stopped at a farm and talked too much.

"My friend followed him, discovered where he was to go in hiding, so I crept upon him, surprised him, and we exchanged shots—mine was fatal.

"I wish to search his clothes soon, and see what he pans out; but now to the work at hand."

Then came the words that open this story.

"Call the roll, Frank, and if silence follows for answer to a name, it means that the dead do not speak."

The roll was called, slowly, solemnly, and each man answered.

There was no silence in answer to a name.

This meant that there was no death list.

"This is grand, boys.

"I could not have hoped for better luck.

"We will have a jubilee to celebrate it," cried Jesse James.

CHAPTER II.

SUSPECTED OF TREACHERY.

"Bury him—the dead are sacred."

So said Jesse James, referring to the man he had killed.

The order was obeyed, for, though lawless men may kill at the drop of the hat, they are always superstitious where a dead body is concerned.

The roll had been called, and of the thirty odd men, each and every one of them had escaped death.

A few were slightly wounded, some had bruises from falls, others had lost their horses, but had quickly gotten remounts, and a number had escaped from a very close call to death.

The chief, Jesse James, had had perhaps the narrowest escape.

But that was natural to him.

And the closer the shave the more it was relished by a man of his bold nature.

Excitement and facing death, killing to escape being killed, acted like wine on him.

It made him lively, and desperate, and he cared nothing for the odds he had to face.

An outlaw he might be; driven to crime, yet he tried hard to live by a rule of honor which he had marked out to govern him through life.

Carried in an honorable channel, devoting himself to the life of a soldier, Jesse James would have won a name and fame far different to that which has cursed his career.

If he had many faults, he also possessed virtues, and this is proven by the many who were true friends to him when the hand of outlawry was against him and his mounted bandits.

"One and all of you, remember, men, that this last escape of ours is the most wonderful of all, the strangest of our lives, and it shall be celebrated with a hurrah," said Jesse James.

"You are all here, and, one by one and two by two, we scattered to save ourselves.

"My plot was to do splendid work with the little river steamer I chartered and fitted for our cruise, and it netted us a handsome sum, though that I was recognized at the prize fight, when fighting Maloney as the masked unknown, broke in upon our plans.

"I won the prize, and the purse I got of twenty thousand dollars goes into the general treasury.

"We got by the tapping of the bank the same night all of thirty thousand more, and Frank kidnapped the daughter of Judge Chase, the man who outlawed me and my band, and set the handsome price of ten thousand dollars on my head, and duplicated it for Frank. I intend to collect that money myself."

A murmur of admiration went the rounds at this daring device to collect the reward offered upon his own head.

But they knew the man, and that he was reckless enough to attempt it.

"And several of us here have the money to turn in," said Jesse.

"I am sorry to say, chief, that I lost the money you gave me to carry," said a man in the crowd who had been trusted with ten thousand dollars to carry.

"Lost it, and how?"

"I tied it in my handkerchief about my waist, and in riding fast it dropped out."

A murmur of doubt followed these words, and Jesse James said:

"Halsey, I have had faith in you, though I did get a letter from an unknown person warning me to beware of you.

"Do you swear that you lost that money intrusted to you?"

"I do, chief."

"Then I must believe you, and——"

"Search him! Let him be searched!" roared the band.

The moon, on the wane, had just risen, and in a clear sky shone full in the face of the man.

The face had turned deathly pale at the cry of the men to search him.

"I seem to be alone in my trust of you, Halsey, unless Frank believes in you."

"I do not, and intended to make the report that I believe Halsey is a detective in our band, a traitor planning to entrap us," said Frank, in his quiet way.

"Have you reason for this belief?" asked Jesse James.

"Only that he watched his chance and slipped to our last captive, just before she was set free upon payment of the ransom, a letter to mail.

"It was all stamped and addressed."

"Did she mail it?"

"She did," was the unmoved response.

"Do you know to whom it was addressed?"

"I do."

"To whom?"

"Pink, the chief of detectives," was the startling answer.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOOM OF THE TRAITOR.

The startling assertion of Frank as to whom the letter had been mailed caused an exclamation to fall from the lips of each man that boded no good for the accused.

"Be patient, men, for I shall sift this matter now to the end," said Jesse James, while Halsey cried, excitedly:

"It is a lie!"

"You did not send the letter."

"I did. It was to my mother."

"It was to Pink, the Secret Service chief."

"Do you know this, Frank?"

"I do."

"Did you see the address on the letter?"

"I saw Halsey hand it to her, and he asked her to let no one see it, and to mail it as soon as she could, for life depended upon it."

"I saw her mail the letter; waited until the mail collector came, and, showing my detective badge,

told him I had dropped a letter in the box giving a wrong address, and that he would oblige me by letting me have it.

"I told him it was in a blue envelope, and how it was addressed, and he handed it to me without a word.

"Here it is."

A letter was handed to Jesse James, and it was read in the moonlight, and aloud.

It was a story of how Jesse James had played the masked unknown in a prize fight, and won twenty thousand dollars, while a bank had been tapped and a girl kidnaped in the same town.

It also said that the outlaws were to disperse, to meet at a certain retreat, the one where they were then, and if Chief Pinkerton was unable to be there in time he would later meet him and his men, and lead them to capture the Bandits' Castle, a secret stronghold of Jesse James known only to the members of his band.

The letter ended by saying:

"I will kill Jesse James myself, so that mine will be the lion's share of the price of his head, for mine has been, and is, a great risk of life."

"Search him, Dick," was all that Jesse James said when he had read the letter, slowly, distinctly and so that each man had heard every word.

Halsey stood like one dazed by the shock.

His lips quivered, his face was livid in the moonlight, but he uttered no word.

The search of the traitor revealed that of the ten thousand dollars entrusted to him every dollar was gone.

This might prove that he had spoken the truth; or, on the other hand, he might have hidden the money.

But he also had papers and a secret service badge of Pinkerton detectives!

"You were a fool not to skip with the money; but no, you were greedy and wanted more," said a voice.

Then Jesse James spoke:

"You do not deny this proof of your guilt, do you, Halsey?"

"I deny nothing, I admit nothing," was the low response.

"You need no trial, for you stand convicted of guilt, of being a traitor to me, and your comrades.

"Your own letter and this detective badge prove your treachery.

"You came here to sell us out, and, but for the great risk that Frank took in escorting Miss Chase to the city, you would have led Pinkerton and his sleuthhounds to our stronghold, and doubtless have killed me, for I will never hang."

Halsey was silent; in fact, all were.

The silence was so oppressive that it was felt by one and all.

Each man longed for some one to speak—a human voice to break in upon that awful silence.

Why did not the man Halsey reply?

A death shot into the midst of the band would have been a relief.

For perhaps only a full minute did Jesse James wait, yet it seemed an hour.

Used to death scenes as the men were, this one to come was one to strain the nerves.

They wanted it over with.

But Jesse James seemed in no hurry.

It would not be unwise for each man to realize what it meant when one became a traitor.

It would do no harm for all to know what a traitor must expect.

"Halsey, what have you to say?"

The voice of Jesse James seemed as though spoken in a vault.

But it was a relief to hear it; to all save the one to whom the words were addressed.

Halsey was no coward.

He had risked life for a big stake.

He had lost the game.

With an effort he controlled himself to speak in even tones.

He knew, none better, that he had forfeited his life by his act of treachery.

Detective though he was, he yet had played a treacherous part, for he had sought the friendship of those men.

He had become a seeming outlaw, won the trust and friendship of Jesse James, only to betray him.

"I have only to say that I am a detective.

"I volunteered to down you and win the price.

"I played the game with life and gold at stake, and I lost, so am ready to pay up, only in some way let my chief and comrades know that I did not die like a cowardly cur.

"Will you promise me this, Jesse James?"

The man had spoken in a firm voice until he made his last request.

Then his voice had quivered.

"I will promise you," answered Jesse James, and, turning to Frank, he said:

"Let lots be drawn for the execution."

Frank got thirteen marbles out of a bag and dropped them into his hat.

Six of the marbles were red, seven were black.

"Form in line, men, and draw as you pass!" was the order.

The brim of the hat was held together, leaving an opening at each end.

Each man thrust his hand into one end and took out a ball.

When the thirteen had been drawn, Frank called out:

"The six men who have drawn the red balls form a line yonder.

"Prisoner, you are given time to pray, or to give any last requests you may desire to make."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECRET PATH.

The man was face to face with death.

But he was plucky.

He was not one to shrink from what he had brought upon himself, either from a sense of duty as an officer of the law, or from a desire to get money.

He was plucky, and showed it.

If the soldier ~~could~~ walk boldly to death for his country, so could he from a sense of personal pride.

"I am not one to cry out for mercy in the face of death, when I never prayed when all went well.

"I have no requests to leave, other than the one that my comrades should know that I did not die like a coward.

"I am ready now, so do not delay on my account, for it is a moment of mental anguish, another of bodily pain, and all is over.

"Shoot to kill me at once is the favor I ask."

They were brave words, and fearlessly spoken.

They took him at his word, and walked with him toward the grave which men were already digging with hatchets and knives.

He stood watching them calmly, there in the opening in the timbers, upon which the moonlight looked calmly down.

"You are a brave man, and I regret to have to put you to death; but it is so written by the laws of the band.

"Whichever trail you take beyond the great divide, which you must cross within a few minutes, I wish you luck.

"Good-by."

It was Jesse James who spoke, and he held forth his hand.

The doomed man took it, and said simply:

"You should not be an outlaw—good-by," and, turning to the execution squad, now in line ten paces from him, and with revolvers in hand, he continued:

"Shoot to kill, comrades.

"Good-by."

The men would have given him a cheer for his pluck, had any one of them set the example.

But the voice of Frank broke in upon the painful scene:

"Ready there, men!

"Aim, fire!"

Six revolvers flashed, the volley echoing far, and as many bullets found the target at which they were aimed—the man's heart.

Those men were dead shots, and they had obeyed Halsey's last request—they had shot to kill.

Without a murmur the man had sunk down where he stood, and, stepping up to his form, Jesse James placed it in position and crossed the hands upon his breast.

In a shallow grave were placed the two bodies, the one Jesse James had brought there across his horse, and that of the detective. It was soon filled in and hardened down, the men mounted, and, like grim spectres in the moonlight, the outlaws filed away in silence from the scene of the midnight tragedy.

Hardly had they gone when a form came sneaking out of a thicket into the moonlight.

The man was well dressed, his face was ashen hue, and he was trembling violently.

"The worst two hours of my life.

"I was lucky to hide when I saw them coming; but I could not stand another such ordeal—I should die.

"So that is Jesse James and his marauder band, is it?

"Well, there is a price upon the head of each and every man, and I need money.

"I will track them to their lair, for I can readily follow so many horses.

"Then I will return, pick my men and win those rewards.

"I need the money, for without it ruin stares me in the face."

So speaking aloud, the man walked away from the dread scene, taking the track the horsemen had left plainly marked behind them.

A walk of half-an-hour and there branched off several roads and many paths.

Here it seemed that almost each outlaw had taken a separate path and the trail was foiled.

He was wild with dismay, and rushed about trying to discover by the light of the moon what he considered the right track to follow.

As he stood pondering a form suddenly arose before him and a revolver covered him.

"Jesse James!" broke in trembling tones from his white lips.

CHAPTER V.

THE STRANGE DUEL.

"Yes, I am Jesse James, and I don't mind telling you, for we are all alone."

The words, in answer to the name spoken by the man who had been in hiding in the timber, and witnessed the execution of Halsey by the outlaws, came from Jesse James.

"I am unarmed," broke from the lips of the man, who saw his visions of getting a fortune in blood-money fading away.

"There we differ, for I am armed," replied Jesse James, ominously.

"You would not kill a man at your mercy?"

"That depends upon who that man is, for men never show me mercy.

"But who are you?"

"A farmer in this rough land, and returning home after a visit to my girl, for, in opening a gate, my horse got away from me."

"That may or may not be true, for I saw you coming, and went into hiding, while you have been, for the hour past, trying to track a party of horsemen who passed this way—my outlaw band. You see I do not mind telling you.

"But how did you recognize me, may I ask?"

"I was startled, and seeing you, I feared it was you."

"But why?"

"I don't know."

"There has been no news of Jesse James in these parts, has there?"

"Oh, yes; we hear terrible stories of you, and some good stories, too."

"Yes, doubtless; but how did you know me?"

"I do not think you are Jesse James, now I look at you."

"Then you know the man, do you?"

"Oh, no! only I have seen his pictures."

"I see, and I will take a good look at your picture as soon as I get you into the moonlight.

"But do you know a man in these parts by the name of Dick Dudley?"

Jesse James saw the man start, and there was a tremor in his voice when he answered:

"Dick Dudley used to live here, but he has gone to the Wild West now."

"I am sorry, for I am Jesse James, and I left my men to come back and see Dick, for we were boys together, later soldiers in the same command, and there is a little unfinished business between us that I wish to settle."

"He has gone."

"Do you know him?"

"Yes."

"What kind of a fellow was he here?"

"Nice enough."

"Have we not met before?"

"No."

"And yet you recognized me here in the dark timber, calling me by name.

"Come over into the moonlight, and let us look at each other, and see if the years that have passed have so changed us that we have forgotten that we were boyhood pals."

The man groaned, but he dared not refuse to go, and once in the moonlight Jesse James said:

"You have not changed much, Dick Dudley, only grown a little older.

"The same mean expression, treacherous eyes, and cowardly look you had as when you deserted from the Rangers and betrayed me and mine, and caused the death of my little brother—you it was who caused my mother the loss of her arm by being fired upon by the soldiers you led to my house, hoping to capture me.

"You have not forgotten it, have you, and that you left the Rangers the very night before we were to fight a duel. You challenged me because I called you a coward and a thief, for you had shown yourself a coward, and you did steal my watch; but you did not remain to fight that duel.

"Still, better late than never, and, as I came here

to look you up and square accounts, we can finish our fight now."

"It will be murder, for I am not armed, Jesse James."

"I have weapons enough and to spare."

"I have had one on your track who has found out for me that you have a well-stocked farm here. It is thought you got it with money left in your keeping for others, and that you hoped to marry a rich girl to pay her money back in place of that you stole."

"I had a meeting of my outlaw band here to-night, for you see I do not mind telling you, and, recalling that I was in your locality, I decided to return and see you, so here I am."

"Now, as daylight is not very far off, we will finish our duel arranged for years ago."

"Come! There are two large rocks over yonder on the edge of the river bank, and I will place a revolver on each one, and we can stand together out here, walk toward them and open fire."

"It will be as fair for you as for me, and the man who falls will tumble into the river and save burial."

"Knowing that you have cowardly legs, I will tie you until I place the revolvers on the rocks, so you cannot escape."

The man was silent but desperate, yet he knew the strength of Jesse James, who in boyhood had saved his life. His gratitude for it had turned to hatred when a young girl came between them, and later he had cruelly wronged the man to whom he owed so much.

Binding him, Jesse James walked over to put one and then the other revolver on the rocks, which were sloping and overhung the river, and so situated that a man would fall from them into the mighty flowing current unless he made an effort to keep his place.

A revolver was placed upon each rock, and then Jesse James returned, unbound Dick Dudley, and said:

"The revolver is there, and loaded."

"Open fire when you get it. You ought to be a dead shot."

"May the best man win."

With a bound, Dick Dudley was away to the rock.

He knew the man, and that Jesse James was just the one to do what he said.

He was determined to reach the rock first, get the weapon and open fire.

But Jesse James saw his desperate intention, and bounded toward his rock.

Dick Dudley reached his stand first, grasped the revolver and got a shot first.

But it missed.

The second shot came from Jesse James. There was a splash in the river and Dick Dudley was swept away.

"Little brother, you are avenged at last," said Jesse James, as he stood on the rock and, taking up the revolver, which had fallen close to the edge, he thrust it into his belt with the grim words:

"A souvenir of the past."

Then he walked to where he had left his horse, mounted and rode away.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LIFE-SAVER.

After his strange deed in the timber on the river bank, Jesse James rode on his way until just at dawn he came to a roadside tavern.

He asked for a room, said he wanted to be called three hours later and have breakfast, and, seeing his horse well cared for, went in and went to bed.

In a moment he had gone to sleep as securely as though there was not a stain upon his character, or he was a hunted man.

Fully refreshed by his sleep, he arose, ate a hearty breakfast, paid his bill, and, remounting his horse, rode once more on his way.

The country was becoming more thickly settled as he progressed, farms were more frequent, and the houses of the farms were located upon the highway bordering the river bank.

He rode leisurely along until suddenly a cry for help rang out from the shore.

It came from a woman in front of a pleasant home. Her eyes were strained upon an upturned boat upon the river, where two children were struggling for life.

In an instant Jesse James dashed up, sprang from his saddle, threw off his coat, boots, hat and belt of arms, calling out to the woman:

"Have no fear, madam, I will save them!"

"My poor children! my poor darlings!"

"Nothing can save them!" shrieked the poor woman, wringing her hands in her anguish, while her cries were bringing others of the household to the scene.

But Jesse James was already swimming with powerful, rapid strikes to the struggling children, both now having floated apart from the upturned boat.

As the little girl was sinking he grasped her firmly, and, with a strong stroke, reached the boat and placed her, limp and half-unconscious over it.

Then he turned toward the boy, just as he disappeared.

A deep dive, and he came up with the boy, now unconscious.

The little fellow was also thrown over the bottom of the boat, and, taking the line in his teeth, Jesse James began to swim for the shore.

It was slow and tedious work, but nearer and nearer to the shore he drew. There the poor mother was upon her knees, praying for him, and the safety of her children.

Other people had gathered on the shore, several farmhands, an elderly woman and a vehicle had driven up from which had sprung two men.

One of these men was crouching down by the clothing and belt of arms of Jesse James.

In his hard struggle to save the children, Jesse James only saw a group upon the shore.

At the risk of his own life he had saved two lives.

Would this deed not atone in part for the many lives he had taken?

This thought passed through his mind as he struggled for the shore.

At length his feet touched bottom, and, taking the girl on one arm, the boy on the other, both unconscious, he waded shoreward, the wholly-frantic mother running knee-deep in the water to grasp her darlings.

She seized the girl with a fervent, quivering:

"God bless you, sir!"

A farmhand took the boy, and they started for the house, the mother calling back to the elderly woman:

"Mother, bring the noble gentleman back with you up to the house."

But, as the life-saver now reached the shore, and as the elderly woman stretched forth her hand to greet the one who had kept the shadow of death out of the house, a man stepped upon either side of the bold rescuer, a couple of revolvers were thrust full in his face, and he heard the ominous words:

"Jesse James, the outlaw chief, you are a prisoner!"

Never before had Jesse James been so cleverly trapped.

Under no other circumstances could he have been.

Sleeping or waking his revolvers were within the ready grasp of his willing hand.

But now he was fairly caught.

He had to admit it to himself.

He was dripping wet, his clothes lay piled up thirty feet away.

But were his faithful weapons under them?

He did not know.

But he did know that two strong, stern-faced men stood by him, cocked weapons covering him, the muzzles within a foot of him.

The men would use them, too.

Their faces showed that.

Then, too, the reward on his life was for "his body, dead or alive."

There was no motive then to take him alive.

He could play but one trump, as the game went against him, and that was a small one.

He must try and bluff it out, and trust to escape later.

All he could do was to surrender then.

"Gentlemen, I do not understand what this insult means," said Jesse James, with great coolness.

The elderly woman and the farmhands looked on, the latter in a threatening way, one having an ax in his hand, the other one an iron-pronged pitchfork.

"There is no mistake—you are Jesse James, and if you move a finger to escape, we kill you," said one in a way that showed that he meant it.

"My name is James Jessup, and I am a missionary, devoting my life to saving lives," was the cool reply.

"Yes, and he has nobly risked his life to save our children, God forever bless him.

"You have no right to take him, and accuse him of being that monster Jesse James," said the old woman angrily.

"No, you jist let up, fer he did what we couldn't do, as can't swim, saved pretty Mollie and Jim from death," said one of the farm men.

"Yes, you let him go, and quick, fer we has somethin' to say, as ther boss is away," ordered the man with the axe.

"You keep quiet, and don't interfere, for we know what we are about.

"This man is Jesse James, and we have got him dead to-night, though we caught him through his doing a good deed."

"You are mistaken, as I will prove to you later," said the prisoner, watching like a hawk for a chance to act.

CHAPTER VII.

A WOMAN'S NERVE.

The coolness of Jesse James would have nonplused many men, and caused them to feel that they had made a mistake in their capture.

But these two men seemed to know just what they were about, for one said:

"You are Jesse James."

"We have made no mistake, and if we don't take you with us alive, we will take you dead."

"I will show you your mistake, and, of course, as you deem you are doing your duty, from my resemblance to Jesse James, the outlaw, I have no hard feelings against you.

"I have often been taken for him before, and am used to it; but then, you know, virtue can often resemble vice," and the prisoner smiled.

"True, but do missionaries of the gospel carry weapons?"

"They often have to in the wild lands in which they travel; and more, my weapons were given to me by Jesse James, for a service I rendered to him some time ago.

"They have his name engraved on them—I will show you."

He made a movement as he spoke to walk toward his clothing, under which he had left his belt of arms.

"Hold! we have seen them," said one of the men.

"Yes, the name of Jesse James is there all right," added the other.

"You have taken my weapons?"

"Yes, for we know how dangerous they might be in the hands of the man whose name is upon them, even if he is a missionary to save lives."

"Your mission is to take lives," added the other man.

"I have just saved two lives," was the quiet response.

"To your credit it is, too; but we have been on your track for over a year.

"Why, we have half a dozen photographs of you with us, and learning how you had been seen coming into this part of the country, we hired a team and were on the search for you.

"It was lucky that we happened along this road just as we did, for we thought we knew you, gave a look at your coat, hat and weapons, and were ready for you.

"You go with us, dead or alive."

"We has got somethin' to say," cried one of the

farm hands, raising his pitchfork to the position of "charge bayonets," while the other swung his axe ready for use.

"Back there!"

"We are officers of the law, and if you interfere with us in the discharge of our duty, we will fire!"

The stern voice of the officer brought the farm hands to a quick halt.

They wanted to help the man who had saved the lives of their employer's children; but they did not wish to get into trouble by it.

The elderly woman had slipped away from the scene, and told her daughter what was going on.

The mother was putting dry clothes upon the children.

Instantly she sprung to her feet, called to her mother to finish her task, ran into her husband's room, slipped his revolvers under her apron, and was quickly down upon the river bank.

"How dare you accuse that noble man of being an outlaw," cried the plucky woman.

"Fate are against him, ma'am."

"It is a lie.

"Honor and nobleness are in every line of his face," she cried, excitedly.

It is the mother talking now.

"The man is Jesse James," calmly answered one of the officers.

"Again I say it is a lie!

"Pitchfork him, John!" shouted the woman.

But though John held his pitchfork on guard he was not pitchforking anybody just then, for one of the officers turned his revolver toward him.

Seeing that John was a perfect failure in carrying out orders, the determined woman shouted to the other farm hand.

"Brain them, Bill!"

But Bill was not in the braining line himself, just then.

Disappointed, the woman determined to act; so thrusting her revolver forward she called out:

"Release that good man, or I will kill you!"

There was determination to carry out her threat in every feature of her face.

The man saw it.

Here was a different proposition from John and Bill to bunk up against.

A mother, desperately determined to rescue the saver of her two children's lives.

One of the officers seemed to feel for her, and to realize her position exactly.

The other only saw a woman trying to take from him a prisoner he was sure of, and upon whose head there was a rich reward.

He saw his own and his companion's life in danger, or thought he did.

"Hold on, Buck!"

So cried his companion, as he saw in his face his intention.

But he was too late.

Buck cared not whether he was threatened by man or woman.

He stood ready when the farm hands threatened, and would have killed them then, only his comrade had checked him.

His comrade was unable to check him now, for Buck did not heed the warning cry.

His revolver was turned quickly from covering Jesse James and brought to level upon the woman.

Another second, with a cry of horror from Officer Leslie, the other man, Buck had pulled trigger, just as Jesse James made a mighty leap.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN IRONS.

With the report of Officer Buck's pistol there was a shriek from the lips of the woman, a second report as her finger dragged upon the revolver she held, and the weapon dropped from her hand.

The bullet of Officer Buck, whether aimed to kill or not, had torn through her arm, above her elbow.

As the officer fired Jesse James had made a spring, and at the man who had shot a woman.

But Buck was a man of nerve, and quick as a flash

he had brought his revolver barrel down heavily upon the head of Jesse James.

It caught the man hard on the frontal bone, and he fell like a log, the blood spurting out in streams.

"I could have killed him, Leslie; but I want to have him hanged, and will," said Buck, with a rude laugh.

"You have done enough for to-day, Buck, in shooting a woman," was the cold reply, and Officer Leslie sprung to the side of the farmer's wife, just as Buck called out:

"Hands up there, you two men, or I'll shine daylight through you.

"Hands up, I say!"

The men dropped their implements and knew enough to raise their hands, while Leslie called out:

"You take care of the prisoner, Buck, and let these men alone.

"Mind you, we are not so sure that this is Jesse James, so don't put your foot in any deeper than you have."

With this he turned to the woman, and said in a kindly way:

"I am sorry you brought the pistol; but do not blame you.

"I'll have one of your men go for the nearest doctor, while I help you to the house."

The woman was pale and weak, but calm, and she called to one of her men to ride with all haste for the doctor, two miles away, and the other to go after the husband on the further part of the farm.

"Don't you men move!" shouted Buck, doggedly.

At this Officer Leslie faced his companion, his face livid with anger, his hand upon his gun.

"Fool! do you wish trouble with me?"

"If you have more to say in this matter I will act."

Buck glared at him; but he seemed to feel that he was going too far, and he put up his weapon and turned silently to Jesse James, who still lay unconscious where he had fallen.

"He will kill him, sir; if he has not already done so," cried the woman.

"Oh, no! he is too anxious to see him hanged.

"It was a stunning blow, yet not a very serious one.

"Let me aid you."

"No, no; aid that dear, noble man who saved my children.

"Don't mind me."

"But I do mind you, for your arm is bleeding.

"Let me tie it up to check the flow of blood," and Leslie did so with his own handkerchief.

Then the woman walked rapidly away to the house, calling back:

"You stay to watch him, for he will kill the poor man.

"I will soon return, and my husband and the doctor will come before long."

The two farm hands had already gone rapidly away, apparently glad to escape from under the eye of Officer Buck.

But just then there dashed out of the house, a double-barreled shotgun in his hands, the boy whose life Jesse James had saved.

He was about nine years of age, a manly little fellow, and his face was now white with passion.

"I will kill him!" shouted the boy, and he leveled the shotgun at Officer Buck, as he crouched by Jesse James.

The officer saw his act, but too late to prevent, and he gave himself up in that instant of time, as a dead man.

But the mother had also seen the boy's act, and with a shriek and bound, she sprung forward and struck up the muzzle of the gun.

It went off, the contents barely missing the woman. She had saved the life of Officer Buck.

Tearing the weapon from the hands of the now frightened boy, who knew how close had been his miss from killing his mother, the woman, her right arm still swinging uselessly by her side, grasped her little son and rushed with him into the house.

"He shot you, mamma, and they are going to take the brave man who saved Mollie and me away to kill him," cried the boy.

Mrs. Westcott, for such was her name, made no reply, but called to her mother to help her, and soon had a basin of water, some witch-hazel and bandages hastening back to the river bank.

The two officers were bending over Jesse James, a feeling of constraint between them.

Jesse James had revived consciousness, but was too dizzy to sit up.

"Here, sir, dress the wound. I hope it is not serious," said the woman.

"No, thank you, I am rather hard headed, and will soon be all right," Jesse James replied, and added:

"Did this brute hurt you at all, with his cowardly shot?"

"It is nothing," she said, though her white, haggard face belied her words.

"Permit this brute to thank you for saving his life," said Officer Buck, sarcastically, turning toward the woman, who answered:

"You are welcome; but I hope you will make better use of it than to shoot women and strike down unarmed men."

"I did my duty, and will do it again—doubtless the boy would have missed me," said Buck.

"Oh, no, he wouldn't, for he loaded the gun with buckshot, and is a good shot, young as he is."

"Keep silent, Buck, for this boy would have killed you."

"See, here, madam, we are secret service officers, and here is my badge."

"We have reason to believe that this man, noble as was his deed in risking his life to save your children, is the notorious outlaw, Jesse James, and, if so, we have done a good act."

"Yes, a brave act, in taking a man who was unarmed, and whom, if he is Jesse James, which I do not believe possible, you would have fled from, or at least that coward would, if he had been armed," warmly said Mrs. Westcott.

"Well, madam, if he is not Jesse James he can prove it."

"If he is, we have made a valuable capture, and

until we know one way or the other, we shall hold him.

"You must wear these irons, sir," and Officer Leslie slipped a pair of heavy steel handcuffs upon both wrists of Jesse James, who smiled in a grim way, but did not offer to resist.

It would have been sure death to him had he done so.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THREAT.

Jesse James did not flinch when the handcuffs were placed upon him.

The cut made in his head by the pistol of Officer Buck was an ugly one, to the bone, and had covered his face with blood.

He seemed not to mind it, now that his dazed senses were returning to him.

Many times had he seen hope almost fail him, in his checkered and perilous life; but now it did seem dark, indeed.

He was a prisoner in irons, none of his band was near, and his case seemed helpless indeed.

But his face gave no token of despair.

"There comes the doctor, now," cried Mrs. Westcott, as a horseman appeared in sight, and a moment after she added in a tone of relief:

"And my husband."

"He may be violent toward you, sir; but don't kill him, for you have done enough for to-day," and she glanced at Officer Buck, who growled:

"I'll drop him in a minute if he comes at me."

"Madam, I am master here, and there shall be no trouble."

"Buck, if you draw weapon again, I'll kill you, for I say there shall be no more trouble," said Officer Leslie.

"Bah! It's a game two can play at, Leslie, but if you killed me folks would say it was a murder to get all the reward on this devil's head."

Leslie made no reply, and just then the doctor dis-

mounted, and Farmer Westcott, who had ridden the horse the hired man rode after him, came up.

Quickly Mrs. Westcott told all, as it had occurred, and there was a look in the husband's face Buck did not like, while Officer Leslie explained the situation also, and added:

"It is most unfortunate, sir, but we have our man, I am sure, and shall take him with us, if the doctor will dress his wound after he has looked to your wife's arm, for I know she is badly hurt, though she pluckily disregards it."

"Dress the wound first of that noble man," said Mrs. Westcott, warmly.

The doctor glanced at the wounded head of Jesse James and said:

"Painful, but not serious, and can wait."

"It is nothing—see to the lady," urged Jesse James.

The doctor looked at the arm, and at his touch the woman did not flinch.

"The bullet has grazed the bone, but not shattered it.

"Come, Mrs. Westcott, get to your bed as soon as possible, for you need rest and this is serious.

"How did the kids come to upset?"

"Mollie tried to get her hat and upset the boat," said Mrs. Westcott.

And all this time Farmer Westcott had not spoken.

His silence seemed threatening and dangerous.

But now he said, addressing Leslie:

"You are welcome to my house until you are ready to go on, and the doctor will see to your prisoner soon."

"Thank you, sir, and we must claim your hospitality for a couple of hours," Leslie answered.

"Come to the house," and then grasping both of Jesse James' manacled hands, he continued in a voice that was full of emotion, and with his eyes dimmed with tears:

"You saved my darlings, sir, the sunshine of our lives.

"I cannot believe you guilty, and that you are the

man these men say that you are, but be you what you may, I am your friend."

"It was only my duty, sir, and I am glad, more glad than you can know, to have saved the lives of those dear children," answered Jesse James.

"Can you not release him—take those irons off while you are here?" urged Westcott.

"You ask in vain, sir, for if this is Jesse James, it is going to worry us, ironed as he is, to get him to prison," said Leslie.

"To prison, and that means to hang him, if guilty?"

"It does, sir."

"Horrible! but come on up to the house, for I must hasten on after my wife," and calling to one of the farm hands to put the horses up and look after the comfort of the officers and their prisoner, Farmer Westcott hastened on to the side of his wife.

But at the door he saw his younger brother just coming in from the farm with Bill, the hired man, who had told him all.

Farmer Westcott's face was set with determination.

He was a fine looking man of thirty-five, with a bold face, yet a genial one, but now its expression was not natural to him.

"Ned, come here," he said, abruptly to his brother, who was a youth of eighteen in hunting costume, for he was just back from a hunt and had a well filled game bag.

"This is terrible, brother, for I have heard all."

"Ned, you must find out just when those men leave, and by what road, for they shall not take that prisoner off to hang him.

"If he is Jesse James, he saved the lives of my children, and I want you to help me take him from them."

"I am ready, brother."

"We must do no killing; but we must rescue him, for he shall not be hanged, even if I do have to take life to save him," and Farmer Westcott passed on into the house, calling back:

"I leave you to look after these officers and their prisoner, Ned.

"Make them comfortable."

A couple of hours after, Jesse James sat out on the piazza, in irons, and guarded by the officers.

The head of Jesse James had been well cared for, stitches taken in the wound, and the doctor said it would soon heal.

The doctor had said that Mrs. Westcott's wound was an ugly one, but would heal in time.

All had a good dinner, Jesse James eating heartily, and soon after Officer Leslie said they must depart.

Their team was at the door, and Buck got in by the side of his prisoner, while Leslie mounted the horse of the outlaw, to follow close on behind the vehicle.

A young farmer stopped at the Westcott house to say that he was out deer hunting, and many miles back, in some timbers, where he had shot some game, he had come upon a new made grave, and about it numbers of hoof tracks, as though many horsemen had been there.

"Another proof that this is Jesse James, for he and his band have been up to some deviltry, and then scattered.

"We shall have to look out, Buck," said Leslie.

Soon after the officers left with their prisoner, and in a moment more two horsemen mounted in the stable and rode like the wind across the farm.

"There's somethin' doin', John," said Bill, shaking his head ominously.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOLDUP.

The vehicle with Officer Buck and his prisoner rattled on its way, back over the road the two detectives had come in the morning, with little expectation of capturing the famous outlaw chief they so longed to get into their power, and the reward for whom would bring to them a small fortune.

They had learned that Jesse James had been seen going to that part of the country, and on horseback,

while later it had been reported to them that a number of horsemen, alone and by twos and threes, had also been making in the same direction.

To such expert secret service sleuths as were both Officers Leslie and Buck, this all looked suspicious.

It seemed as though Jesse James, who had lately escaped from one great danger, was going to risk another robbery of an important nature.

In that country, with only a small town here and there, it must surely mean a bank, or the holdup of a railroad town.

This had caused the two officers to happen upon the scene of Jesse James' rescue of Farmer Westcott's two children, at a very unfortunate moment for the life-saver.

Looking for the man as they were, had they come upon him on the road, knowing him through his many pictures and the descriptions they had of him, there is no doubt but what they would have attacked him, yet with doubtless a deadly encounter, for Jesse James was ever on the alert for detectives, regarded every man as a foe, whom he did not know, and was not readily taken by surprise.

But they caught him when he was at their mercy, they felt sure of their game, from his horse and saddle, and a quick examination of his clothing and weapons told the story against the brave life-saver.

The result is known, and when they left Farmer Westcott's with their man, though there was a possibility that he might prove that they were mistaken, it did not seem probable.

Knowing that there might be others of his band about, they were anxious to get him all haste to the city and in prison beyond rescue.

The coolness of the man, his seeming indifference to his fate, put them on their guard, for it seemed as though he felt sure of rescue.

Officer Buck, though a detective, was a man without heart or mercy. He was brutal and would have cut the throat of his prisoner without mercy, or a pang of conscience, did he consider that there was a chance for his escape.

Officer Leslie was a man of different nature.

He was a splendid officer, and did his duty in full, but he was humane and merciful.

After leaving the Westcott farm, Leslie appeared as though no cloud had come between them. He seemed to have forgotten that he had to threaten the life of his companion.

He did not like Buck's methods, but the two were allied in the venture, and he wanted no ill feeling between them.

"Remember, Jesse James, if there is an attempt made to rescue you by your gang, you will be the first one to die, for I shall kill you," said Buck.

"Doubtless, for it is money you want, and the reward reads for the body of Jesse James, dead or alive; but you will pay for it if you kill me and find that you have made a mistake, for I am not a friendless man," said Jesse James.

Leslie overheard what was said, as he was riding close up behind, and called out:

"See here, Buck, don't be a fool, for this man is not to be killed until I know the full truth about him.

"Whether we are attacked or not, you go mighty light on your gun, or you may be the one to hang for murder."

"And I ordered the hanging," laughed Jesse James, at which Buck uttered a savage oath, sending his prisoner to the devil in no choice language.

Hardly had the oath left the lips of Officer Buck, when clear, determined and ringing forth was heard:

"Halt! hands up, there!"

They were in a heavy woodland, and it was very dark and gloomy there—a spot into which the sunlight could not penetrate.

Forms of men were seen in the undergrowth, and the face looking over the sights of a rifle was seen to be marked with a red handkerchief tied over it and holes cut for the eyes.

A man with less nerve than had Officer Buck might have drawn rein.

But he did not.

He held the whip in his hand, and instantly it fell upon the backs of the horses.

They sprang forward at once into a run, in spite of the rough wood, while Officer Leslie opened fire with a revolver in each hand, and which he had hastily drawn.

A shot came from the rifle, but the bullet whistled far above the heads of the officers and their prisoner.

If fired at them, it was a wild shot.

On sped the team, and the holdup was a miscarriage.

Jesse James had not moved at the demand, and the action of Officer Buck.

Now, as he saw that the intended holdup was a dismal failure, he said, in his grim way:

"New in the holdup business, I guess."

"You seem to know," growled Buck.

"I don't have to be a road agent to know that."

"Well, Leslie, we got through an ugly scrape, and I hope your shots told on them," called out Buck.

"I had a bead on one fellow, with a red handkerchief over his face, and think I broke his arm," answered Officer Leslie.

Then he added:

"They were bad bunglers at the holdup business, and—but it is all right," and the detective was silent, while Jesse James looked back at him, the same thought in his mind—that he knew who they were that had tried the holdup.

The truth was that Officer Leslie had seen a man clad in a light gray suit, just such a one as he had seen Farmer Westcott have on, and he had felt that the farmer had a strong desire to rescue the man who had saved his children.

And Farmer Westcott and his young brother were indeed the holdup men.

They had ridden across the farm to another road, taken it to a position well ahead where it crossed the river highway which the detectives would follow, and hastily selecting a hiding place, lay in wait.

But Officer Leslie had not thought of the farmer

when he fired, but the instant after saw the light gray clothes and regretted his shot.

The shot had told, for Ned Westcott had fallen, and the farmer sprung from cover to the side of the wounded boy.

They had not intended to fire on the officers, only bluff them into releasing their prisoner.

Fortunately Ned Westcott was not mortally wounded, though it was serious, and the farmer hastened to get him upon his horse and back home, where the wife lay suffering.

The doctor was sent after again, but he was told that Ned had met with an accident.

"It's all right, farmer—my mouth is closed; glad it was no worse," and he "winked the other eye," and added:

"I hope that fellow can be saved, for I can hardly believe he is the monster we hear so much about."

CHAPTER XI.

BUCK MEETS HIS MATCH.

The two detective officers got safely through with their prisoner to the little river town, where they could catch a steamer that would take them a considerable distance on their way.

They returned the horses and vehicle they had hired, placed the horse of Jesse James in the keeping of the stable man, as he could not be carried in the boat that trip, and engaged a state-room. They were to be not only with their prisoner, but one of them was to remain handcuffed to him, so there would be no chance of escape.

In spite of their wishing to keep the fact that Jesse James was their prisoner a secret, there were men who thought they recognized the man, and it leaked out and created considerable excitement.

Officer Buck took the afternoon watch with the prisoner in the stateroom, and the two had nothing to do but sit in silence, for Jesse James was not inclined to talk.

There they sat, the right hand of Jesse James

handcuffed to the left of Officer Buck and the iron links connecting the hands about a foot in length.

Officer Leslie came in often, and had supper brought at nightfall, after which he relieved his companion and said:

"Come at twelve to-night, Buck, and relieve me, so we can both get a rest and sleep."

"I'll be on hand promptly," was the answer.

And he was.

Locking Buck to the prisoner in his stead, Leslie went off to his stateroom to go to bed, and all was silent.

The prisoner had not spoken during the exchange of guards, and seemed half-asleep.

But half-an-hour after, when all was quiet on the boat, and Buck was nodding, the left fist of Jesse James was swung around like a battering ram, and drove with terrific force upon the face of the officer.

Stunned, yet making an effort to cry out, before he could do so, the left hand once more got in its work by clutching the throat of the detective in a grip that no mortal man could unloose.

It seemed to crush his throat into a pulp.

The man struggled hard at first, but in vain.

He struck wildly at his prisoner, yet the blows lacked power.

Soon the officer's head fell back, and torrents of blood gushed from his mouth and nose. Releasing his deadly grip, the prisoner began a hasty search through his pockets for the key of the manacles.

He found the key in an inner pocket.

Off slipped the handcuff, and he was at least free from his keeper.

Then Jesse James turned to the satchel on the floor, and into which he had seen the officer place his belt of arms.

The satchel was locked, and unwilling to lose time by hunting for the key, he used Buck's knife and slit the thick leather.

There was the belt of arms, and it was quickly strapped about his waist, while the look about his

face was such that it would have been a brave man indeed that would have attempted to bar his way.

The officer's overcoat hung there, and, as he was a large man, Jesse James drew it on, while, folding his own hat out of sight, he put on that of Buck, and appreciated his secret-service badge.

Then he opened the door leading out upon the deck of the steamboat, locked the room from the outside and stood gazing at the dark banks of the river as the boat swept along.

"Just in time for a landing," he muttered, and he worked rapidly forward, almost to the lower deck, and as the gangplank was put ashore he walked across with several other passengers.

Glancing back at the upper decks of the boat, he saw standing there Officer Leslie, plainly revealed by the bright light of the torches.

At the same moment he saw a steamer at a landing a hundred yards away, and quickly he walked there.

He was just in time to get aboard the boat, and the next moment was on his way back to the town where the detectives had embarked with him upon the other boat.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RESCUERS.

Little dreaming of what had taken place in the stateroom, where he had left his companion ironed to his prisoner, Officer Leslie left the deck of the steamer, as it swung away from the landing, and decided to retire.

On its way swept the steamer, until a landing was made, a dozen miles below the town, to get wood at a woodyard.

As the crew ran ashore to load up with wood, a dozen men came aboard in couples and alone.

As it was customary for men to do this, to get a drink at the boat's bar, nothing was thought of it, until the men were assembled in the saloon at the bar.

"Captain, take a drink, and let me say if you are a wise man you will listen to reason.

"We happened to hear from a telegram from the town above, that you were carrying two detective officers and a prisoner.

"Now, the prisoner is a friend of ours, the officers have the wrong man, and we want him.

"The prisoner and one officer are in stateroom thirteen, and the other officer is in number twenty, as the books show.

"Now, we are going to take that prisoner, for we are all prepared to do so, as two of our men are in the pilot-house ready to act, others are near the lines to cut them with a hatchet and leave your crew ashore, while another is talking to your engineer, and, at a signal, we will swing off and run your boat, and there will be some lives lost.

"But yield to the situation and all will go well with you and your boat.

"Have a drink, captain, and keep quiet."

So said, very calmly, yet with threatening earnestness, the leader of the dozen or more men who had come on board of the boat at one o'clock.

It was Frank James, and his stern face showed that he meant to rescue the detectives' prisoner, at whatever risk.

The captain had turned pale.

But he saw the force of the argument.

His crew hardly outnumbered the men who had boarded his boat.

The latter were fully armed, and would be desperate fighters.

Half of his crew, in carrying wood, were ashore.

The men had come prepared to swing the boat loose from the shore and take the prisoner.

So the captain, a man of quick action and nerve, smiled and said:

"The drinks are on me, sir, for you have downed me most cleverly.

"You hold the trump cards, and I guess the game is yours.

"Make no disturbance to alarm my passengers,

and I will take you to the head officer, and urge him to yield up a case dead against him.

"Name your drinks, gents."

"Solomon wasn't in it in wisdom with you, captain."

"I take my whisky straight," said Frank.

The drinks were taken, and the captain and Frank went to stateroom twenty-one.

"Officer Leslie, I wish to see you, please," said the captain.

Leslie had thrown himself down on the bed, with his clothes on, and, expecting that Buck was having trouble with his prisoner, he quickly stepped out, and was covered by Frank's revolvers.

"No danger, sir, if you obey orders.

"I have possession of the captain and the boat, and men enough to hold it, so yield up your prisoner, and all will be well.

"Refuse and we will take him; that is all!"

So said Frank, and Leslie realized, as the captain had, that he was cleverly caught.

It was a bitter pill for him to swallow, and, to get time to think, he sought to argue, but was cut off with:

"Not a moment to consider.

"Do as I order you, for I play my cards to win."

"Nothing can be done, Mr. Leslie; ladies and children are on the boat, and we must yield," said the captain.

"If I must, I must.

"You will give me a receipt for my prisoner?"

"I will—he can do so himself, I think," and Frank smiled.

"Lead the way to the prisoner's stateroom, and leave your weapons where they are.

"If you wish to save the life of your brother officer, urge him to make no trouble," said Frank.

"Yes, I will go in and talk with him first."

"You will do nothing of the kind, and the door opening upon the deck is protected."

Leslie sighed and led the way.

A knock at number thirteen brought no response.

Another knock was answered by a low moan.

Leslie started, and the captain quickly took out his passkey and opened it.

The stateroom was lighted, and the scene that those who looked into it beheld made all shudder.

There lay Officer Buck upon the floor, covered with blood, which had oozed from his ears and mouth.

The man was himself, but white as death, and too weak to speak.

The prisoner was gone.

The captain held up his hands to check the startled cries.

Officer Leslie staggered to the door for air, nearly swooning, strong as he was in nerve.

"This is awful," groaned the captain.

"Quick, see if there is a doctor on board who can care for Buck!" cried Leslie, quickly rallying.

"We have been anticipated.

"The prisoner has helped himself.

"There is no further need of our remaining.

"I thank you, captain and Officer Leslie," and Frank spoke quietly and slowly.

Then raising his hat, he motioned to his men, and moved away.

"You will hear from this—mark my words," cried Leslie, white as a ghost.

"A threatened man lives long," answered Frank, as all halted at the bar, for the scene was one to unnerve the strongest heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OUTLAWS AT LARGE.

With all his iron nerve, Jesse James felt at ease only when the steamboat upon which he had taken passage and refuge was on her way once more, and the town left behind.

He went to the office, received a stateroom to the town he had left the afternoon before, and then, lighting a cigar, paced up and down the deck, thinking about his future plans.

"Accident favored me in getting this boat in the

very nick of time, and it seems as if fate points the way I am to go.

"I shall keep close to-morrow, for there may be some one on board who may know me, and we should arrive before ten o'clock, as the clerk said we should make but few stops.

"I shall land at the town below, however, and drive on, for I wish to get to that stable in a different rig from what I had on when I left it, and my horse I am determined to have.

"I must get my horse, too, before it is wired all over what happened on that boat.

"Once again mounted, I will make my way to the stronghold and keep quiet for a few weeks."

Thus musing, and having decided on his future actions, Jesse James returned to his stateroom, and went to bed, soon dropping off to sleep, as though no haunting phantoms of a weird past came in his dreams.

When he appeared at breakfast in the morning, he was unruffled, and in the coat and cap of the detective, Buck, was much changed in his looks, while still wearing his slouch hat, velvet jacket and topboots.

When the boat landed at the little town five miles below where his horse was, he went ashore, sought out a Jew dealer in clothes, and when he left the shop, his own things wrapped in a bundle, he was much changed by a blue suit, the detective's cap and a pair of spectacles.

Going to a stable, he hired a man to drive him to the place to which he wished to go, and he was glad to know that there was no news in the place of what had happened in the boat.

He hired a good team, and made the man rush the horses along at a clipping pace, so soon drew up at the stable.

At the Jew's store he had written something upon a slip of paper with a printed heading, and which he had taken from Detective Buck's valise.

He saw the stable man, who had seen him as a prisoner in irons, but there was no recognition, so good was his disguise.

"I made a mistake and got off at the town below, so had to drive up," he said to the stableman, in explanation, as he handed the paper over to him.

The man read the paper aloud:

Please deliver to bearer, Officer James Jessup, the horse, saddle and bridle of the outlaw, and left with you until called for. Officer Jessup will pay the hire.

Respectfully,

LESLIE, Detective Officer.

"All right, sir, the bill is just two dollars; but there is no boat leaving to-day."

"I am going back over the trail Officer Leslie came with his prisoner, and on a little Secret Service work," was the reply.

"Ah!" and the man called to have the horse saddled and brought out, while he asked:

"Do you think they will hang that fellow, James?"

"If they get him alive to the city."

"Which those two men will do."

"Which those two men will not do, for Jesse James escaped," said the daring outlaw, as though it gave him real pleasure to defy all danger.

"Escaped?" cried the man.

"Yes."

"But where and how?"

"He was ironed to Detective Buck, and confined in a stateroom; but, in some way he killed the detective, so that he could free the irons from him, and escaped.

"That is why I am here; to go over the track they brought him, and Jesse James paid the bill, mounted, and rode away.

He stopped at a grocery and bought some provisions, tying them up in the bundle behind his saddle.

A mile from town he ate a lunch in a secluded spot, and went on his way, stopping at night at a tavern in a small village.

He at once saw that the town was wild with excitement, and was not long in discovering the cause.

A stranger, entering the village on horseback, had been arrested by the constable, who had once seen Jesse James, and vowed that he was that terrible man.

That he represented Jesse James there was no doubt, in size, looks and dress.

Jesse James knew the man at a glance.

He was one of his own men.

In the band he was known as "Jesse James' Double," and he prided himself upon his resemblance to his chief.

Several times before it had gotten him into trouble, but now it began to look very black for him, indeed, for a number threatened to hang him then and there.

"I must save poor Jack," muttered Jesse James, for he realized the situation.

"And I will," he added, seeming to forget that he needed saving himself.

Forcing his way into the crowd before the tavern, he called out:

"Hold, men! that is not Jesse James; but he looks like him, and, more, you have caught the very man I am after.

"See! I am a detective officer," and he threw open his coat and uncovered a badge.

It was the one worn by Detective Buck, and taken by Jesse James.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOR A COMRADE'S SAKE.

"The man is Jesse James, as I kin take oath, and I wants ther price set on his head and intends ter git it, so yer can't bluff me, mister."

The speaker was a big, burly fellow, who held on to his prisoner like grim death.

The prisoner was a man who had been at the timber, and one of the executioners of the detective spy, Halsey.

He started visibly at the ringing voice of his disguised chief, penetrated the disguise of the clothes, detective cap and glasses, and felt a great throb of hope in his heart, a moment before so despondent at his capture.

He had gone into the village to pass the night, and his captor had thought he recognized in him

Jesse James, and, watched his chance and, catching him off his guard, had held him up and made him a prisoner.

Now the man felt safe, for he knew that his chief was playing a bold bluff to release him.

"My friend, I am not playing a game to bluff you, but I tell you that your prisoner is not Jesse James, but one who shot a man some time since in Kansas, and I have been on his track ever since and followed him here.

"I am perfectly willing to pay you for what you have done in taking him, but he is my man; his name is Jack Tharley, and I shall put the irons on him and take him with me."

These were bold words, and none of the crowd sought to dispute the stranger's claim, save the man who still held his grip on the prisoner.

He was the bully of the town, suspected of being a crook himself, and a dangerous man to buck against.

Among the things that Jesse James had taken out of the satchel of Detective Buck were a pair of steel manacles and the key to them.

These he now drew from his pocket, and stepped forward to place them on the bully's prisoner, when the fellow called out:

"You keep off, or yer'll git inter big trouble."

As Jesse James still advanced, the crowd swayed out of his path, and the bully called out:

"Here, Jim Boon, you hold this man, Jesse James, and I'll soon larn this fresh stranger a thing or two."

"I warn you off from interfering with an officer of the law," cried Jesse James, and others said the same, for no one cared to thus treat an officer in their village.

But the man was furious at fearing he was to lose a prize, and, confident in his own great strength, rushed upon the one whom he determined should soon have a skin full of broken bones.

How he did it, the crowd did not just understand; but Jesse James met the attack, warded off the blows, seized the man in his giant grip, dealt him a stunner in his face that made the blood flow, and

hurled him to the ground with a force that knocked the breath out of him.

"Next time you attack me, I warn you, as an officer, I will kill you," said Jesse James, "and, stepping up to the side of Jack Tharley, he snapped the steel manacles upon his wrists, saying:

"You are my game, for I hold the warrant for you, dead or alive, for murder.

"Make an effort to escape, and I'll put a bullet through you."

"I've had all I want of trying to escape.

"I'll take my medicine," answered Jack Tharley, chiming in to help the play of his chief to save him.

All were surprised at the easy manner in which the greatly-feared bully of the village had been hounded.

He got to his feet in a dazed kind of way, silent, scowling, and, calling to Jim Boon, his pard, to follow him, walked away.

Going to the tavern, Jesse James ordered supper for himself and prisoner, and asked where Jack Tharley's horse was.

The bully had taken him away with him, it was said.

At first Jesse James had intended to stay all night, but he changed his mind, as he deemed it best to get away with Tharley, and also that by remaining there might be news spread about of his escape from the steamboat.

To his stronghold, known as the Bandit's Castle, in a most isolated spot on the river, it was a couple of days' ride, and Jesse James was anxious to get there before further trouble.

When he and Tharley had had supper, it was reported that the bully was outside, mounted upon the horse he had taken from Tharley, and, with his pard, Jim Boon, having filled up on tanglefoot, was seeking trouble.

"I want that man," said Jesse James, and he walked out to where the bully and Jim Boon were.

"Is you a lookin' fer me?" asked the bully.

"I wish to say that that horse goes with the prisoner, and, as an officer of the law, I demand him of you."

"You can git him only one way."

"How's that?"

"Come take him—ain't that right, Jim?"

"It are," promptly responded Mr. Boon, and, full of bad whisky and enthusiasm, he gave a yell and opened fire on Jesse James.

The bully looked hurt that Mr. Boon should have opened the ball, but quickly drew his revolver.

If he desired to kill there was no proof of the fact, for his bullet flew wild, killing a yellow dog.

But Jesse James was quick as a flash in returning the shot, and his aim was true and steady.

Jim Boon dropped dead, while the bully spurred forward upon Jesse James, firing as he did so.

But, though he wounded Jesse James slightly in the arm, causing him to drop his weapon, in a second of time the disguised outlaw had jerked out another revolver with his left hand and fired.

Headlong from his saddle dropped the bully, a dead man before he struck the ground.

Catching the rein of the horse, Jesse James checked him, and asked quietly:

"Is there a doctor here?"

"I am a physician, sir," said one of the crowd.

"Kindly dress my wound, sir."

This was soon done, the doctor got a ten-dollar bill for his work, and then Jesse James and Jack Tharley rode away in the night, the hotel landlord holding an order on the secret service chief of Kansas City for the payment of the cost of burying the two men, while a coroner's jury rendered a verdict of "justifiable homicide," and a fervent "glad of it."

"Now, Jack, I'll relieve you of your bracelets, and we'll push on, for this is a dangerous locality for us now," said Jesse James when the two were on their way.

"Which way, chief?" asked Tharley.

"To Bandit's Castle," was the stern answer.

CHAPTER XV.

TRACKED.

Jesse James was right in not remaining in the little village where his going had, as was so often the case with him, left graves behind him.

The next morning, just as the more curious of the villagers, who were glad to have a break in the humdrum lives they led, were returning from burying the

town bully and his shadow, Jim Boon, a message was received, giving an account of the capture and escape of Jesse James, the manner in which he had gotten off of the steamer, the late boarding of the craft by a number of his band at a woodyard, to rescue him, and that a watch was to be kept up to try and find him, or any member of his band, and run them down.

The message went on to say that the rescuers, after leaving the steamer, had divided their party, but all were known to be going toward a certain point, doubtless to the secret retreat of the band, where they were wont to rally at times, upon the orders of their chief.

Frank James, it was said, had led the party to rescue the brother, but horsemen had been seen about the country, all going in a certain direction, and, as they were strangers, all were suspected of belonging to the Jesse James band.

There was more told, also, and which greatly shocked the little village where a tragedy had occurred the day before.

That was, in effect, that Jesse James had boarded a steamer, after his desperate escape, back to the town where the two detectives, Leslie and Buck, had started with him, and, disguising himself as a secret service officer, with spectacles, coat, cap and badge, he had recovered his splendid horse from the stable where the officers had left him, and upon an order signed Leslie.

There he had departed, no one knew whither, but going west.

The villagers were frantic.

Their town was west from the town where Jesse James had gotten his horse.

If the bully had not been right, that Jack Tharley was Jesse James, he had not missed it far, for the rescuer of his prisoner was indeed the outlaw.

And Jesse James had rescued a comrade beyond a doubt from the bully.

At once the greatest sympathy was felt for the bully, and extended also to Jim Boon, as the only man who had stood by his friend.

There was at once talk of raising a marble slab to their memory, and one good woman went out and put a bunch of flowers upon their graves.

The constable of the village wanted to kick himself for not having interfered in the matter, and the landlord cursed when he learned that he was out the

burial expenses, for, of course, the order on the secret service chief was worthless, and the bill had been rendered for double what it was, as an agreement had been made with the undertaker to divvy.

That evening the sheriff of the large river town which was the starting place of Jesse James after he got his horse, arrived with a score of mounted men, all picked, and they were on the track of the outlaw and wanted recruits.

They got them, the landlord and undertaker being two of the half-dozen villagers who went along.

Asking as they went along through the thinly-settled country, they got on the track of Jesse James and his companions, and, picking up volunteers, well mounted and armed, the sheriff soon found himself the commander of two score men, while there was a promise of more.

At one place where there was a telegraph station the sheriff learned that Detective Buck, though still very weak, would doubtless recover.

Detective Leslie had wired for several officers to join him, and was already on the trail of Jesse James from his landing from the steamer.

With this information, the sheriff and his party pushed on, and their cry was:

"To the Bandit's Castle!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BANDIT'S CASTLE.

The stronghold of the Jesse James band, and which the outlaws were proud to call the "Bandit's Castle," was situated in a desolate and very wild and rugged part of the country, far from habitations or settlement.

It was built upon a hill, upon the banks of the river, commanding a view of the surrounding country.

Strong as a fort, it looked like one.

Surrounding it was a stout stockade wall, and the "castle" was built of massive logs, through which a bullet could not penetrate.

Above the main building there was a tower, from which it took its name of castle, and within this a score of men could stand protected, and through holes deal death upon those who dared to attack the stronghold.

The main building was larger, had bunks around the side, a large fireplace, tables and weapons of all kinds around the walls.

Half-a-hundred men could be housed there.

Near it, and within the stockade, was a storehouse, for extra weapons, ammunition and provisions.

All about the castle there was fine grazing land for the horses, the latter also having quarters within the stockade, when necessary to bring them in for fear of an attack.

It was to this stronghold that the Jesse James band made their way after their late raid.

Some had been given money and orders to take to the castle a fine supply of provisions, liquors and cigars for the "jubilee," which Jesse James said they should hold there to celebrate their big haul of treasure, and to open their new retreat as an abiding-place.

The men had arrived and at once begun work to get the castle ready for the jubilee.

A large tree sheltered the place, and beneath it the affair was to be held, for there was a large spring, though it was not expected that much water would be used on the occasion.

One by one, two by two, the men began to arrive, until all of the band had arrived save three.

Those were Jesse James, Frank James and Jack Tharley.

As the men were getting anxious about their delay in coming, one afternoon a shout was heard, and the three looked-for ones rode up to the castle.

Jesse had met his brother a few miles back only, and learned from him of the attempted rescue, and both talked of all that had happened since they had parted.

"We will have our jubilee, men, and a grand one, but then we have got to prepare for a fight, for I learned as I came along the wood that a large force is on its way here to attack us.

"After our jubilee I will go out with Frank and half-a-dozen men on fast horses to see about placing sentinels on an outer line about the castle."

So said Jesse James, and the men greeted his words with a cheer, for they felt that he was not going to fly, but to fight.

But the more he thought over the matter the more he was convinced that it should be business before

pleasure, and that he should prepare first for the fight, and have the jubilee later.

Calling Frank and some half-a-dozen of his best men, he mounted his white steed, Snow, and the party rode off on a scout.

They had not gone half-a-dozen miles when, from a ridge, they saw a force of men filing slowly along, as though following a trail.

"Men, we must get into the castle with all speed, and there are men enough there to give us trouble," said Jesse James, and a moment after they were riding for their lives.

As they neared the castle, however, they saw that there was an advance guard to the force they had seen, and a party of mounted men were already preparing to attack the bandits' stronghold.

"We must break through them at all odds.

"Use your revolvers to kill!" came the order, and the bold bandit himself led off upon their ride.

It was the party of the brave and persistent sheriff, who had at last reached the goal they had started for.

He saw Jesse James and the men just as they broke from the timber, and, shouting an order, cried:

"Follow me, all!"

"Rush the castle and head them off!"

It was a neck-and-neck race, and toward a given point.

The men in the Bandit's Castle had seen their danger and were prepared for the attack, firing from the loopholes in the tower at the sheriff's party, for they beheld in the distance the larger force of enemies, now rushing to the front.

"Now we have these fellows," cried Jesse James, as the two parties of horsemen came close together.

A moment after they were at close range, and it threatened to be a hand-to-hand fight on horseback.

"Round 'em up, boys!" cried Jesse James, as Frank dropped the noose of his lariat over the sheriff's head.

The next instant the sheriff was dragged from his saddle, and then came the shock of the meeting.

Horses went down, revolvers rattled, men fell dead, and the next instant Jesse James and half of his horsemen swept on and into the Bandit's Castle, the body of the dead sheriff being dragged at the end of the lariat.

It was a bitter blow to the assailants to lose their leader, the sheriff, but the force in the rear was commanded by Detective Leslie, for he had come rapidly on to be in at the death, and all felt that he was one to be relied upon.

As night was coming on, Officer Leslie at once ordered the Bandit's Castle to be surrounded, and the men to camp about it and besiege it.

This was done, and for their jubilee the bandits of the castle found that it was a fight for their lives.

But all felt perfect confidence in their leader, daring and stern chief, who had said cheerily:

"There shall be no gallows for us, boys!"

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

For a week the siege of Bandit's Castle had lasted. The dead were buried at night. Officer Leslie had sent couriers after more men, and for provisions to be received at the nearest farms.

The bandits saw that by night their foes had erected safe little forts nearer and nearer to the castle.

Their food and ammunition could not last much longer.

All looked to their chief.

They saw that he had decided upon some plan.

To their surprise they saw him raise a white flag on the tower.

A man came forward bearing a white flag.

"I wish to arrange terms with your leader.

"I will meet him on the field, and unarmed," called Jesse James.

The man returned, and soon Officer Leslie approached, and alone.

He was in his shirt sleeves and appeared to be unarmed.

"Look out for treachery, Jesse."

"Not from that man, Frank.

"He is as square as they make 'em," was the answer, and Jesse James, also without his coat, walked out to meet the detective chief.

They talked together for an hour, and then parted.

"Well, boys, I surrender the Bandit's Castle at sunrise in the morning," was what Jesse James said. Not a man spoke.

Night fell, and the voices of the bandits were heard

in song, and the music of violin, flute and guitars came to the ears of their foes.

Then all was silent.

The plaintive notes of a bugle sounded:

"Lights out!"

Morning dawned, and as the sun appeared Officer Leslie signaled the Bandit's Castle.

There was no response.

He went forward under the flag of truce, alone.

The stockade gate was easily opened.

He called to his men:

"The place is deserted!"

They advanced cautiously, fearing a trap.

But no shots came.

The castle was deserted.

There were half-a-dozen new-made graves—the dead, but no living man of the band.

A quick search by Officer Leslie revealed a dark tunnel way in the storehouse.

Following it with torches, they were led for a quarter-of-an-hour, through an underground, narrow passage, just large enough for a horse to pass through.

Horses and men had gone that way.

The bandits had planned their castle well.

The tunnel had cut to the river, opening from a cliff of clay.

From there they had entered the river and swum their horses down stream to safety.

They had a full night's start.

Later it was found that the band had scattered.

Jesse James and his band had escaped.

* * * * *

Mrs. Westcott, the farmer's wife, and Ned, the brother, recovered from their wounds.

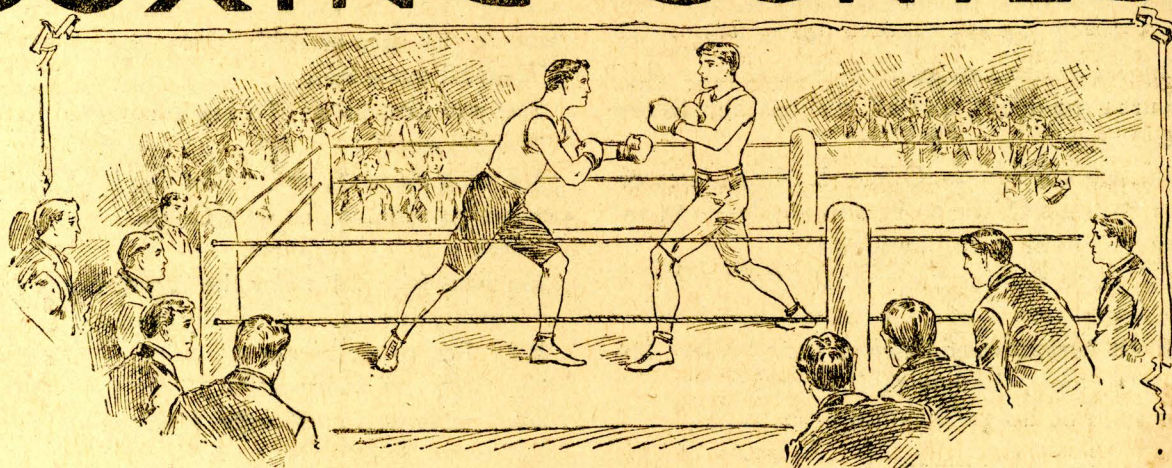
But Mrs. Westcott wore an empty sleeve, as her arm had to be cut off.

In spite of the rising of the country people against Jesse James and his band, he and his men escaped, and Officer Leslie, who still kept upon his track, next heard of them far away from the scenes that had known them, still seeking gold at the muzzle of a revolver.

THE END.

Next week's issue of this Weekly, No. 50, will contain "Jesse James' Double Duel; or, The Price of a Life." A rattling story, boys—one of the wildest episodes of a wild life.

BOXING CONTEST



Clang! The gong has rung for the last round. Get up out of your corner and square off for action. The contest is drawing toward a close. Get in quick, or you'll be too late. It's been a great contest. Don't let it be said of you that you did not enter it.

Here are a few stories full of snap and dash, written by boys who can write and box, too.

A Fair Fight.

(By Chas. Barrie, Pennsylvania.)

Never was there a more quiet boy than Jack Kome. I was in the same room with him in school, and I ought to know. There was also a bully in our room, Harry Sprat by name.

One day he wrote a note across the room calling Jack names. Jack promptly told the teacher and Harry was expelled. After school Jack found Harry waiting for him, and after a lot of talking (for Jack did not want to fight) they agreed to settle it with fists.

They did not box in rounds, but just kept it up till one was licked.

At the start off Harry landed on Jack's nose and caused it to bleed. But when he rushed again Jack side-stepped and landed between Harry's eyes, giving him a pair of black ones.

Now Jack seemed mad, and uppercut on Harry's jaw so hard he knocked him down.

When Harry got up, Jack threw a right-hand jolt into Harry's ribs. Jack again rushed, but Harry tapped him on the nose. Then Jack rushed and when he got near Harry he stepped aside and swung on Harry's eye, closing it up. This was the end of the fight and Jack Kome won.

Jimmy Simister vs. John H. Johnson.

(By Joseph King, Pa.)

Round I.—The men sparred for an opening, Simister made a left lead for the jaw, but missed. John Henry came in with both fists for the body, but the blow being blocked did little damage. Jim poked out his right for the stomach and landed fair and clean. The blow staggered Johnson, and he came in right and left. In the mixup that followed Simister was forced to the ropes. Simister made a left hook for jaw and forced his oppo-

nent to the center of the ring. Little else was done in this round.

Round II.—Simister came in fresh and landed lightly on John Henry's wind. They both sparred for a moment. Simister rushed with right and left to the face. John Henry landed lightly on the head in return. Simister rushed again, John Henry hugging him for protection. Simister landed a left-hander to the ribs. John Henry answering by a crashing right-hand hook to the jaw.

Simister staggered and received two more, one on the wind, the other on the head. Simister clinched. Both sparred for a moment.

Johnson sent a left-hander to the face, but was blocked. Simister rushed. Again John Henry hugged him to avoid the whirlwind.

Simister rushed again, but was repelled by a stiff left-hander to the mouth. Simister aimed a neat left-hander to jaw.

Round III.—John Henry landed a right-hand hook to the nose. Simister clinched; John Henry rushed right and left to the face, and added another to the ribs. Simister rushed, but failed to land. John Henry landed a left hook to the face by way of a reminder.

Simister rushed, but did little damage. Simister clinched and began hugging his man. John Henry landed a stiff right-hander to the jaw. Simister again hugged.

Simister was failing fast.

John Henry led a stiff reminder to the heart. Simister weakening. John Henry led an awful right-hand hook.

In the mix up that followed Simister received a crashing left-hander in the jaw, and fell like a log. He took the count. The rest of this round was of no importance.

Round IV.—Both men came in tired in this round and little work was done until the latter part.

Simister led to the face, but missed; John Henry landed a right-hander to the jaw, which told. Simister rushed and missed. They clinched. John Henry here

began to weaken. Simister rushed again, forcing his opponent to the ropes. They clinched. John Henry landed lightly on the jaw. Simister in the mixup that followed pushed his man under the ropes. John Henry was up and over the ropes in a jiffy.

Round V.—John Henry led a left-hand jab to the wind, but failed to land. They clinched. Simister led for the jaw, followed by a left to the wind. John Henry resented by a right-hand swing to the body.

They sparred for wind. John Henry rushed, landing repeatedly on the face and body.

They clinched.

Simister landed lightly on the head. John Henry led a terrific right-hand swing which was cleverly ducked. This round ended with both men sparring for wind.

Round VI.—The men shook hands. They sparred for a moment for an opening. (Both men came in in this round with the intention of winning.) Simister led for the jaw, and was answered by a left-hand hook to the wind. Simister rushed, but was cleverly blocked by a stiff right-hander. They clinched. This was followed by a lively mixup, both men landing repeatedly on the face and body. Johnson led for the head, which was blocked. Simister rushed his man to the ropes. They clinched. John Henry rushed this time and staggered Simister with a left-hand jab. Simister resented with a wild swing to the body. They clinched. Both men fought like tigers in this part of the round, John Henry doing some lively footwork. Simister made a successful rush, which dazed his opponent for a second. But not for long, as John Henry soon rushed and landed repeatedly on face and head. Simister fainted and missed a good left-hand jab. Both men clinched. John Henry landed a good right-hand hook to the face.

A Lively Bout.

(By Fred Potts, Ohio.)

Round I.—Men shake hands. Step lively, cool down. Brown rushes and lands right on wind, left on head. Smith lands a right on body and they clinch. Smith rushes, but is blocked and receives a right jolt on the jaw that staggers him. Brown motions with left. Smith ducks and receives a stiff right uppercut on the nose.

Smith lands right on ribs. Brown makes several quick motions, landing right on jaw and left on ear. Smith lands right on ribs and left on jaw. Brown rushes Smith to side of the house, reversing right from face to ribs. Smith lands left on wind. Clinch. Smith lands right on eye. Bell rings.

Round II.—Brown lands a stiff right on jaw and uppercuts with left. Smith lands a hard left on stomach. Clinch. Smith lands right on ear. Brown lands right and left on body. Clinch. Now comes a slugging match, in which each receive several hard ones. Cautioned by referee. Brown lands right and left on body and is away before Smith can land his vicious swings. They again mix things up. In the mix-up, Smith got his head under Brown's left arm and Brown sends his right around his back and lands a stiff one on nose. Clinch. Smith lands left on ear. They are slugging away when bell rings.

Round III.—Cautioned by referee. Shake hands.

Smith rushes, lands right on body. Brown lands left on ribs, reversing it to jaw. Clinch. Smith lands left on ear. He rushes and receives a right jab on jaw that staggers him. Brown reverses both hands and lands four blows in rapid succession, two on body and two on head, one on each ear. Smith uppercuts with right and jabs with left, landing both. Clinch. Cool down. Smith lands left on stomach and tries to reverse it, but is staggered by a right hook on jaw. Clinch. After a few motions they begin to land stiff ones again. Brown lands a stiff left on eye and follows it up with a right on jaw. Smith hooks with left and jabs with right, landing two on body that feaze Brown. Clinch. Sparring when bell rings. Shake hands and begin to talk.

Punishing a Brute.

(By Danny Borsnan, N. Y.)

"Let that woman alone, you brute!"

This was the sharp command of a young man of about twenty, as he faced a large, broad-shouldered man who was beating a weak-looking little woman in one of the side streets of busy New York City.

The man he addressed glared at him and then raised his hand as if he would again strike her, but before it could fall the young fellow stepped quickly forward and planted his right fist under the bully's jaw, knocking him into the gutter and then stood calmly by waiting for him to get up.

He did not have to wait long, however, for with a howl of rage the bully leaped to his feet and with his head down and his fists flying like flails he rushed straight at the young fellow, who stepped calmly aside and let him have a stunning left hand uppercut under the jaw.

The bully gave a dizzy lurch to one side and fell face downward on the pavement, but he sat up in a moment and glanced around in a dazed sort of way until his eyes rested on his youthful antagonist.

Then all seemed to come back to him, for, with a bel- low of rage, he rushed forward, swinging his left fist back as he did so, and then letting drive straight at the young man's face. His opponent ducked swiftly, giving his body a swing to the left as he did so, and handing his left fist in the bully's solar plexus.

The bully's knees bent under him, his arms dropped to his side, and with a gasp he fell full length on the ground completely knocked out. The young man then walked off amid the cheers of the spectators, while one of the bully's friends was trying to bring him to.

A Fight Against Odds.

(By Eddie Kelly, Ill.)

When Charles Ashton entered the boxing tournament of the Seneca Athletic Club of Seneca, Ill., he had little hope of coming out a winner.

He had considerable skill as a boxer; but many of the contestants were older and stronger boys, and it looked as if Charles had not much of a chance.

His first two bouts he put his opponent away with ease. His third bout was much harder than any other. His opponent was Pete Cleson, a boy who had easily de-

feated all his opponents but Charles. He was several years older and weighed forty pounds more. He could hit a powerful blow.

When the evening of the contest arrived Charles was nervous and sick at heart.

"I have no chance to win," he said to me as I acted as his second. "Pete is so much stronger, older, heavier than I. His reach is longer, and I suppose I will not touch him."

"Keep up a good heart," said I, slapping him on the back. "Keep cool and you'll beat him. He always loses his temper, and then you will be sure to beat him. He will fight wildly and he will forget to guard his body."

Charles had plenty of courage. He thought over what I told him, and said he would remember.

When the bell rang for the bout to commence he faced his big opponent with a confident smile on his face.

Round I.—Pete made a wild rush at Charles. Charles avoided almost every blow. He was finally driven to the ropes and fell to his knees. Every one thought that Charles was already knocked out.

He arose, however. He wore the same confident smile. Pete made a second rush, but Charles sidestepped and planted his right fist on his opponent's nose and the left to the jaw.

Pete started up and nearly fell back while the spectators yelled with excitement. Now was a chance. Pete was too much bewildered to defend himself. Charles darted in and rained blow after blow on his breast and head.

Round II.—Pete made a rush. Charles sidestepped and planted a left on his opponent's nose and a right to his eyes. Charles ducked a right swing and planted one on his nose that brought the first blood. Blinded, Pete staggered around the ring trying to avoid the stinging blows that landed on his head and body. Charles landed one on his eye. Pete is knocked down; he is up again; but Charles landed a left to the point of his chin, and he went down and was counted out by the referee. Charles is the champion of our town.

The Contest for an Apple.

(By Fred Habel, Conn.)

One day there was a crowd of boys on the side of an alley.

Another boy from the window of a house threw an apple down. A boy caught it, but another boy wrenched it from his hand and would not give it back.

So one boy said:

"Will you fight it out, and let the victor have the apple?"

They got in the ring.

One of the boys was Frank Stedman, thirteen years old, and the other was Walter Fisk, fourteen years old.

Walter rushed into Frank, but the latter guarded off all the blows, and then gave him an uppercut which put him out for a while, but he rose up again, and then gave him a half-arm jolt and then struck him in the stomach.

Frank, who was smaller, could not reach him, but as he saw his opponent lower his arms he rushed in and struck blow after blow on his face. Blows fell on nearly every part of his face. Then Walter plucked up courage

and rushed again. But Frank stepped sideways so quickly that Walter fell down.

Walter was wild with rage, and rising, struck Frank in the chest, knocking him down.

In a minute Frank was on his feet again. He rushed at his opponent while his fists shot out like a machine. This caused Walter to fall on his knees. He arose again unhurt, and made a pretense to hit him in the nose, but struck Frank in the wind. Frank then aimed a blow at his head, but struck him in the shoulder. Walter then struck Frank in the stomach, knocking his wind out for a minute, but he did not stop, but rushed at Walter, who did not guard the blows and fell back amid the shouts of the boys.

Frank got the apple and was the champion fighter of the whole street.

An Evening's Entertainment.

(By Cliff Doty.)

There was a favorite place which our crowd got in the habit of going to in the evenings to pass away the time.

We had a pair of boxing gloves and would get a crowd of men in and then would fight for the championship.

There were three parties that took part in this boxing match. John Barnes, Glen Leonard and Ross Smith. John challenged Glen.

Of course, the challenge was accepted.

They stepped out in the ring.

The first blow John gave Glen he was through, for he went off with a bloody nose.

Ross Smith was a friend of Glen's, and so Ross challenged John to fight. The challenge was accepted. The two got ready and came together.

One could tell it would be a tough boxing match.

Ross hit John in the eye the first thing.

Then came John's time. He hit Ross on the cheek a hard blow.

It went on that way about ten minutes, then John was knocked out.

The last blow was so hard on the end of the nose that I never heard of John having on boxing gloves after that.

A Draw.

(By Harry Taylor, Mass.)

I was a witness of a boxing bout that was held in the Weeden Toy Factory one noon time. The contestants had no regard for each other's face, and they had a pretty warm time.

They shook hands and squared off. Their names were Manuel Hicks and Fred Long. After fooling with Long, Hicks swung on the side of his jaw and nearly knocked Long down. Then Long led out with his right for the jaw and received a stiff punch between the eyes which nearly blinded him. Then Long took more care of his face. He led out with an uppercut which failed to land and just escaped receiving a punch which, if it had landed, would have flogged him.

He gave Hicks one which almost took the breath out of him and followed it up with an uppercut which sent

Hicks sprawling, and the timekeeper said the time was up for the first round.

This just saved Hicks.

Then the men cheered for Long, but they didn't cheer long when Hicks got at him again. Hicks made a bluff to strike out and Long took the bait and made a heavy swing, only to miss and receive one in back of the ear that put him on the floor for six seconds.

At the end of that time he got up feeling bad. He made a swing at Hicks which was easily ducked and got a left-handed jolt that jarred his slats for a minute. Then Hicks noticed that Long was getting tired and gave him a solar plexus blow to wake him up, which nearly put him to sleep.

Long gave Hicks a blow on the side of the neck that staggered him, and gave him another over the heart that sent him back to the door. That was the end of the second round.

At the commencement of the third round Hicks made a number of attempts to reach Long's face, but without effect, but Long got one in return between the eyes. Then Long gave him an uppercut and a blow over the heart that made him sick. Then Hicks blacked Long's eye and it was all over.

It was called a draw.

A Fight Between Two Club Leaders.

(By Wm. Jordan, N. C.)

Round I.—They entered the ring amid shouting and cheering. The referee called time. They met each other in the middle, shook hands, and both seemed to be afraid of the other; but after they had stood there a while Tom hit at George, but he, George, fell on his knees, and when he started to rise, Tom hit him on his shoulders. Then George rose, and hit at Tom, Tom ducked it, and gave George an uppercut that staggered him. Referee called time.

Round II.—They met, shook hands; the referee called time.

George gave Tom a good one on the jaw. Tom rushed, and then they clinched. The referee had to part them. Then Tom gave George one on the nose that knocked him out. Tom got two pairs of boxing gloves as a prize.

LETTER FROM A PRIZE WINNER.

Here's a letter from Roy L. Townsend, who won a magic lantern in the last Jesse James contest. He likes it and we are glad to hear that he does. Congratulations to him on his success.

FREEPORT, Me.

Messrs. Street & Smith—

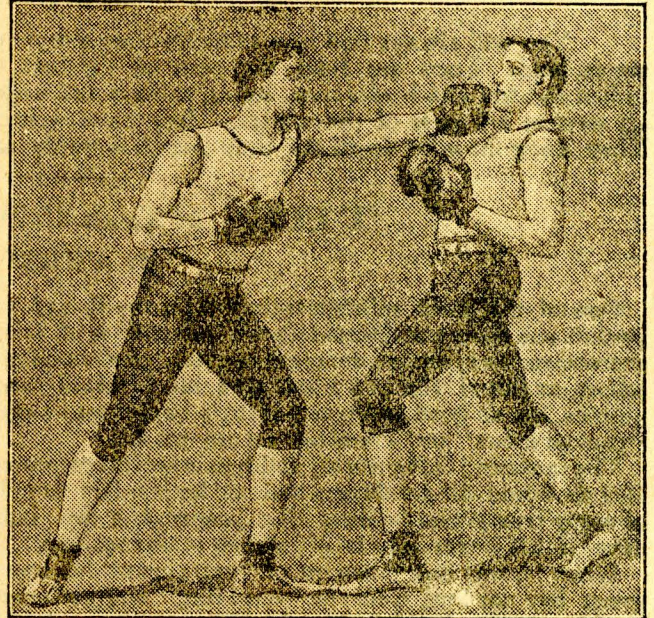
Gentlemen: I received your letter and was very much surprised as well as pleased to learn that I had won a prize. I received my magic lantern, and I think it is a dandy, as I have already tried it. Thanking you very much for the prize, I am,

February 24, 1902.

Yours truly,

ROY L. TOWNSEND.

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Every boy who has ever seen a boxing contest has a chance to capture one of the prizes. The contest may be between boys or men, beginners or well-known amateurs. If you should not win a prize you stand a good chance of seeing your story and name in print, anyway.

To become a contestant you must cut out the Boxing Contest Coupon on this page, fill it out properly, and send it to JESSE JAMES WEEKLY, 238 William Street, New York City, together with your article.

No contribution without this coupon will be considered. Come along, boys, and make things hum.

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THE FLAGMAN'S PERIL.

By CHESTER F. BAIRD.

One of the most reliable trainmen on the B. and O. road at one time was Dennis Casey. Dennis is of Irish extraction, as his name denotes—a great, good-humored fellow, as full of fun as a Florida swamp is full of mosquitoes, but as good and trustworthy a brakeman as ever “packed a box” or “cranked” on any road.

The amusing adventures, and hairbreadth escapes of Dennis would fill a volume; and as he is a fair sample of many trusty men holding like positions, a few incidents in his career may be of interest to our readers.

When he was first taken on as “extra man” he was a green boy not long from the “ould sod,” and not much confidence was placed in him by his conductor. But it was not long before his faithful attention to duty, his unvaried good humor and quickness in learning, brought him into favorable notice, and he was taken on as permanent brakeman.

One dark night he was sent out from a way station to flag the express. His conductor followed him around the curve to watch how he performed his duty, it being his first time with a flag.

A few rods from where Dennis stationed himself with his red light was a swamp covered with a dense growth of briars and bushes, and peopled with countless thousands of frogs—croaking frogs, whistling frogs, talking frogs, in fact, frogs of all kinds. Now, Dennis' credulous mind was filled with the “wind” the boys had given him about train-robbers, desperadoes and ghosts who haunted the vicinity of the road, and when he stopped and stood, lamp in hand, watching up the track for the gleam of the headlight of the engine he was to flag, he was somewhat startled to hear, in deep, sepulchral tones, “Who are you? who are you?”—coming from the roadside. His answer was ready, though. “I'm Buddy Mitchell's hind brakeman, sur.”

“What do you want? What do you want?” came in a peremptory voice from the swamp close at hand.

“Sure, sur, I'm sint out to flag Number Tin,” answered Dennis.

The echo of his voice had scarcely died away when he was startled into a full sense of his peril by many rough voices, exclaiming: “Shoot him! shoot him!” accompanied by the splashing of water and rustling of bushes. For an instant Dennis was “taken all aback,” and retreated in good order a half-dozen car lengths. Then “his Irish kim up,” and flourishing his lamp, he swore: “By all the powers o' Mallkillie's long-tailed cat! I'll stay here and flag Number Tin in spite o' all the robbers an' ghosts in Ameriky.”

The sound of the conductor's laughter was drowned

by the whistle of “Number Tin,” and Dennis flagged her in good style; but he has never heard the last of his ghostly adventure with the frogs.

“To the divil with such animals as frogs,” says Dennis. “Ameriky needs a St. Patrick to drive them into the say.”

Dennis' call for the services of St. Patrick in “Ameriky” was louder than ever when he had his next adventure with “riptyles.” He was on night freight, and a wild stormy night it was, dark as pitch, and a cold, driving rain falling steadily. When they side-tracked at Blackhand for the express, the probabilities were that they would have to wait for some time, as she was reported late when they passed the last telegraph station. As they were in out of her way the boys were inclined to take their ease. The engine being too hot for Dennis, who was braking ahead, he found a box-car, the door of which was fastened without being locked. Pushing it open and holding up his lamp, he saw that it was only partially filled with boxes and barrels, leaving abundance of room for him to take a little snooze, and be right on hand when the express roused him up in passing. He crawled in, closed the door to keep out the rain, and pulling down a couple of boxes, stretched himself thereon, and was soon dreaming of “the girls of Kilkenny” at Donnybrook Fair.

“How long I had been aslape I don't know,” says Dennis. “I was dreamin' av the dear ould home across the says, an' me darlint Kathleen Avourneen, whin I was wakened by somethin' crawlin' over me legs. I listened an' heerd a-schrapin' nise on the floor, an' a-hissin'. ‘Fwhat the divil,’ says I, ‘is that? Mebbly there's geese in one o' the boxes.’ Heerin' the schrapin' an' hiss'n' still, I riz up, an' fwhat did I see? Why, two av the biggest snakes I ever heerd on, a-racin' roun' the floor, an' pokin' their bloody snouts up at me. At fursht I thought they kim from the moind, loike they do to them who drink too much ‘Loightnin' John.’ But I don't drink, an' I soon made up me moind that the divil was to pay. The box I was on was close to the door, an' widout waitin' fur me lamp I opened it, an' joumped out into the rain, an' ran for the ingine. Av coorse I yelled, an' me hair stood up on end, loike the hair on them divilish porkypines, fur I was sure the varmints was afther me.

“The ingineer an' fireman called the conducthor, an' they wint to the car an' crawled carefully up, an' sure enough there they saw 'em. They hadn't kim aroun' the boxes yit, or they'd av joumped out. The conducthor had a bill for 'em. They belonged to Barnum, av coorse,

or they wouldn't av been gettin' up 'a new sensation' on the thrain. They had been left behoid whin the animals was shipped the day afore. The conductor shut the door quick enough, I tell ye, leavin' me lamp for the benefit o' their snakeships, who were captured by the menagerie min the next day. I don't see the sinse o' sich bloody riptyles, anyway! Fwhat with frogs, an' snakes, a poor devil has no pace av his loife in Ameriky. The blissid St. Patrick would make short worruk av thim, if he was here."

As time rolled swiftly by, Dennis had no more adventures with "riptyles," and—as has been said—became one of the most trusty brakemen on the road. His last adventure, however, came near costing him his life, and brought his name to the notice of the company, who have provided for him for his faithfulness and devotion to duty.

Dennis' conductor had come to trust him with a flag as soon as he would any man on the road, and when one cold, snowy night in midwinter, it became necessary to flag the night express at Pleasant Valley, he was sent back around the curve, with red light and torpedoes. Just around the curve is a high truss-bridge over a ravine. In the darkness and confused as to the whereabouts of the bridge, by the blinding snow driving in his face, Dennis walked on to it, slipped, and before he could make an effort to save himself, fell through to the ground below, a distance of full fifty feet. The drift of snow under the bridge broke the force of the fall, else he had been killed. As it was, one leg was broken in two places, and the ankle of the other dislocated.

When he realized his situation, his first thought was that he could never get out without assistance, and he

called loudly many times. But the echo of his voice died away ere reaching the top of the ravine.

But, great heavens! the express!

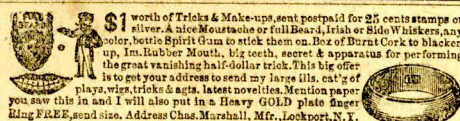
The thought caused him to start forward, and he fell with a yell of agony. But setting his teeth in his quivering lips, he determined to reach the track above or die in the attempt.

A dozen times he sank exhausted; but his indomitable will carried him through, and when he reached the side of the track, the headlight of the express was not a mile distant. He crawled along, and with trembling, freezing hands, all cut and bruised, fastened his torpedoes to the rails and sank back utterly exhausted.

He, luckily, lay on the right side, and at the first sound of a torpedo, the engineer looked down and saw him, almost covered with snow.

The train was stopped, Dennis was taken on insensibly, and tenderly cared for until they reached Zanesville, where his broken limbs were set, and he was nursed back into health again. But his active railroad days were gone forever. His hands and feet were so frozen that it was found necessary to amputate several of his fingers and toes, and poor Dennis is a cripple for life.

But the company appreciated his services on that terrible night, and now he holds a position on the road, the duties of which are light and easy, and his appointment reads—for life.



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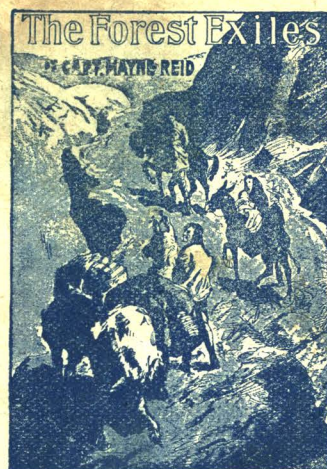
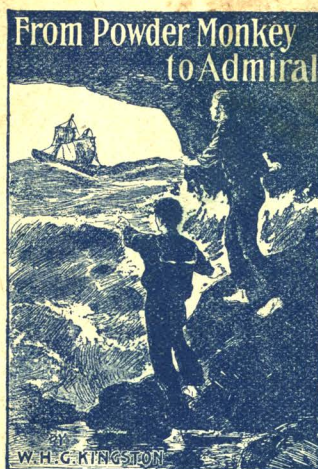
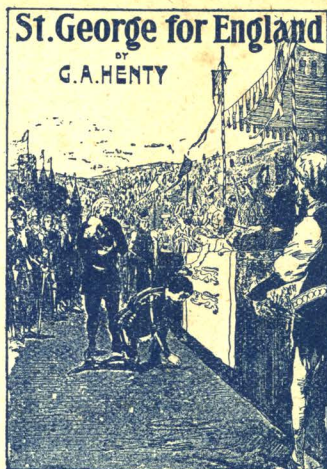
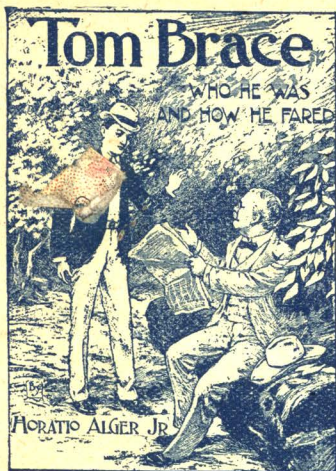
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